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Town's Library Project Out to Bid

The town's \$6.3 million library project is one step closer to reality now that bids have gone out for construction to convert the former upper Alden school to the town's new public library.

Project Manager Deborah Bornheimer was excited this week as she discussed the pending construction of a new library facility to open in September, 1997.

As of Tuesday, 27 contractors had picked up bid documents for submission to the town. Plans call for an on-site pre-bid conference July 9. Pre-filed submission bids are due July 16 and general bids are due July 23.

Csaba Kovaks of Quincy has been selected as clerk of the works. Bornheimer said he comes to the project with extensive public and private sector construction experience including school projects.

"We'll be gutting the inside and rebuilding from the inside out. Each old beam will be replaced with a steel beam. Essentially we'll be reconstructing the diaphragm first," said Bornheimer. "The delicate part of the project will be the structural work, the reinforcement. After that we should pick up some time."

Bornheimer had high praise for new Building Inspector Richard MacDonald, whom she said came in late on the process but dug right in to review and deliver the final plans and specifications so that bids could be opened on time.

Plans and specifications were carefully reviewed with Architects Galliher, Baier, and Best of Simsbury, CT. to ensure that state and municipal codes were met so there would be a minimum of change orders once the project begins, Bornheimer said.

Renovations are expected to cost about \$4.7 million. Architectural and engineering fees will add another \$500,000 and furnishings, which will be covered by private funding, will cost an estimated \$1 million.

Last year, town meeting authorized borrowing of \$5.5 million pending the award of a state grant. A few months later, the town received \$2.3 million as part of the state's library construction program. To date, the library capital campaign has raised \$800,000 in private donations and Campaign Director Rodger Smith expects to exceed the \$1 million mark.

Private donations will fund such items as study carrels, computers, telecommunication equipment, furniture, drawers, stands, and miscellaneous items such as smoke detectors. Furnishings will involve a separate contract and bidding process at a later date.

Library planners also have a "wish list," depending on where the bids fall, which could provide for the addition of a cafe and other special features.

The building, constructed in 1927, served as the town's high school for many years before becoming an elementary school. Drop in enrollment led to closing the building several years ago and the schools conveyed the building to the town for use as a library.

Not included in the renovation contract will be linkage of the building to the wastewater treatment plant behind the high school. The town will spend an estimated \$89,000 to tie 3 town buildings into the treatment plant: the Upper Alden, the Percy Walker Pool, and the existing Duxbury Free Library building.

Library Trustee Chairman Jane Bradley said the Friends of the Library group is launching a "penny harvest" with the help of the town's children in order to help fund the children's library wing. The hope is to collect millions of pennies which will be matched in donations by donors to the library campaign.

Bornheimer said plans call for awarding the library contract in August with work slated to begin in September.

She said the town accountant will insist that funds are on hand before the contract is awarded so library officials are cautiously optimistic that bids will come in at a reasonable level.

If they come in higher than expected, library officials will be forced to dip into funds planned for furnishings and fitups and move up the campaign goal in order to cover construction and other costs, she said.

Site of the new Duxbury Free Library

